

Chichijima Cruising guide

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While researching information on Chichijima, we realized there wasn't very much information available, and so we've decided to make a guide for those who wish to sail there. We arrived there on february 16th 2019, and stayed for two weeks. Here is what we learned.

Sending the paperwork

If you plan to make Chichijima your first port, you will have to apply for a [Closed port permit](#) because Ogasawara isn't an open port. You should send the information a week before arriving, but I recommend sending it before you leave your last port. You need to send the permit to this address:

itou-h55gs@mlit.go.jp

I originally sent it to another email that I found listed on their website for the Kanto region, but they asked me to send the information to this address instead. It was a painstaking process for me, because we were already underway, and so I had to send the documents via SAT phone (it took 1 hour per image).

Along with the permit, you need to send:

- [Crew list](#)
- Passport scans
- Boat papers (certificate of registry)

You also need to send the above files (minus the closed-port permit) to the Ogasawara Coastguard, along with this form:

- [Pre-arrival notice](#)

The email for the Coastguard is:

jcg3ogasawara-9q3p@mlit.go.jp

You should also send the papers before leaving your last port. You'll need to send them a 24h arrival notice too, but this need only be an email with your ETA. If information changes, you need to tell them about it, send as many emails as necessary. The Japanese Coastguard is very communicative, and they want to know where you are. They will likely ask you for your SAT phone number, upon sending your first message include your SAT phone address too.

Arriving in Chichijima

Position at dock: 27°5.921'N 142°12.013'E

The port of Chichijima is very easy to navigate through, even at night, all is well-marked and well-lit. To check-in, you need to head deep into Futami Bay in the main fishing harbour. As you enter, you will likely see a ferry docked on your port side, continue past this and past the breakwater with a large rock at its end (which stands on your starboard side). The dock will be on your port side. As of February 2019, they are building an extension to the dock that provides a bit more shelter in SW winds. This dock isn't charted, so if you arrive at night be careful. The end of the dock is lit.

The dock is quite high, and there is only one ladder. It is likely you'll be the only boat there, so aim for the ladder when docking. The pier has big rubber bits to protect your boat (although they do stain), even the ladder is made of thick rubber and won't damage your yacht. You'll need to wrap your lines around big yellow bollards. You won't have to worry about your lines chafing on the dock because they've added a rounded rubber edge to it — Japanese are so thoughtful in that way.

When you arrive, stay on the boat and don't go on land. It is likely that the JCG will be there waiting for you, with the officials lined up to check you in. If you arrive very late, the JCG will be there anyway to give you instructions (as was the case for us, since we arrived at 9pm). They will give you a time for check in on the next day. Weekend check-ins are no problem, we did it on a Saturday.

Paperwork

You'll be visited by quarantine, immigration and customs. There was about 5-6 people on the dock, taking turns aboard our boat.

QUARANTINE

They will ask if you have any plants, meat or other fresh items on board. They may or may not confiscate them, I had none aboard when they came and so they took nothing. I had many dried legumes, grains aboard in jars that they saw, but they didn't care to take them. You can see a list of prohibited items [here](#).

CUSTOMS

The officials will ask you about your last and future ports, they will ask for precise dates. Because making a long list of planned ports is no longer necessary, you only need to give them a general list.

They will give you a **Closed port permit**, that will give you blanket permission to visit all “closed ports” (which basically means everywhere in Japan that is not an open port, including anchorages) for as long as you are in Japan.

You will also get a **Naiko Senpaku** (domestic boat) registration that will waive the requirement for you to do port entry/exit Customs paperwork in open and closed ports (although you are still required to do port entry/exit Coast Guard paperwork for open ports, but actual requirements vary by port).

IMMIGRATION

They will ask you to step off the boat and likely take you into an office to do the paperwork. You will fill a card like they have on planes, and they will take a photo of you as well as a scan of your index fingers, again, this is the same sort of machine they have at airports. They'll ask you to fill many papers, all of these have english writing. Most travellers are allowed 3 months on a tourist visa, although your boat can stay in Japan indefinitely.

They will ask you if you need to take on gas and water, and how much. They will likely come to your boat later on and set up a time and date to help you do this. You cannot do this by yourself.

Map

A map of the island will likely be given to you on arrival, otherwise you can get it at the visitor center. They may, or may not have an english version available. The map shows where all the shops and restaurants are, it also marks all of the trails on the island.

About the town

The town is not very big, but there are many parts to it. You'll probably spend all of your time in Omura, although the part of town where the dock is is called Okumura, and between it and Omura is Kiyose. If you walk, or cycle down the main road to the east of the bay, you'll end up in another small town called Ougiura. Although there is not very much there, aside from walking trails, beaches and some hotels.

There are many remnants of the war here, many structures left behind that you can visit. You may need to hire a guide if you want to see the more prominent ones.

Diesel

The gas stations don't carry diesel, and so you must fill at the fishermen's pier on the other side of the harbour. The officials will take you with them to do this. We carried our empty jugs to fill them. If you need a lot of diesel, it may be possible to dock there to fill up, but you'll still need their assistance.

Water

An official will come to your boat to set up a time for water, the *Ogasawara Yacht club* has a key to a water faucet that stands just 10 meters away from the dock. They will unlock a little trap door, and hook up a hose to it. You can then carry water jugs back and forth to fill up (it's really not far), or you can move your yacht back a few meters to do it.

Showers

At the time of the year we were there (February), the showers were closed. It may be because it's the driest time of the year, and that water on the island is scarce (they rely on rain and a small RO plant).

The nearest shower is near the beach at Omura, it's an open shower that is used by swimmers to rinse themselves off.

Toilets

There are public bathrooms everywhere in the city, there are two of them right near the pier and many more around town.

There is a flat fee of JPY 1000 to fill up, we only filled 100L, but if you require much more they may charge extra for it.

Groceries

There are two main stores in Omura (the main town), and both are sitting right in front of each other. These stores, like many others, close before and after Ogasawara Maru (the ferry) comes and leaves. There is:

B.I.T.C

Sells onigiri, milk, some imported products, fresh produce, beer, some hardware store products (paint, tape), toiletries and stationary.

Suupa (supermarket)

Sells bigger quantities of certain items, has a better selection of fresh produce, beer, milk and snacks.

Internet

There are many options for internet on the island.

Heartrock cafe

Located on the main road, easy to recognize because of all the wooden statues in the front. This cafe offers wifi, you can check your messages while having a drink or some food. The fare here isn't cheap though, I recommend this for light use only.

Ogasawara visitor center

The Ogasawara visitor center, on the sea-side of the road and located behind the Korean restaurant (orange building) on the main street offers free, and fast wifi. You can sign up to "free hotspot" and get internet for 180 days (cool huh?). The connection is fast, and the best thing is that you can go sit in the back in the 'study section' and use the power outlets (ok for American-style devices). It opens at 9h and closes at 17h, its schedule is tightly linked to the comings and goings of the Ogasawara Maru ferry. Although in the high season, it is always open.

Ogasawara internet center

This place is harder to get to, it's a good uphill walk (~45min) from the pier as it is situated at the very end of town. It is secluded, and not easy to find. They offer laptops for your personal use, but you can bring your own. Know that they don't offer wifi, only LAN. There is power, and they charge JPY 300 per hour. They're open from 9h to 17h.

Money

There are ATMs on the island to take out money, you have a few options:

Post office (Yuubinkyoku)

The post office is easy to find, it's a building with a large red T as a logo. You can use the machine inside to take out money with a credit card. It's located on a side street, if you walk on the main road, look for the building with a whale painted on it, and take a right. The post office is on the left side of the road.

Near the ferry terminal

There is an ATM (green booth) near the ferry terminal, easy to spot.

Hardware stores

There are no hardware stores on the island, you'll find some goods at B.I.T.C, otherwise the people at the gas station at the end of town may have a few engine parts. There is also a store in town for outboards, located in a side street in Omura. You may be able to order parts online, and to have them shipped with the company **Yamato**. Although it may take a while since the only way on and off of the island is by boat.

Medicine

The only place I could see that had medicine was a small souvenir shop (which also has toiletries and medicine). It has a sign near it with the Japanese word "Kusuri" which means "medicine".

Laundry

To my knowledge, there is none. If you make friends, it's a good idea to ask them. Otherwise, if an Ogasawara Yacht club member visits, ask them about using the washing machine at Flora (a store). The word for laundry is "sentaku", and the one for washing machine is "sentakuki". They'll also understand if you ask for "koin randorii" coin laundry.

Walking trails

There are many walking trails on the island, if you have the island map you'll be able to see them all. They are clearly marked, and very easy to find. Many are within walking distance, walking on the roads is really no problem at all. If you have a bicycle, this place is good for that, although there are many hills.

The first trail you should check out is very close to the pier, it leads up to a look-out point. From it, you'll see your yacht at the dock as well as the entire bay. The view is absolutely gorgeous! There is also a really cute shrine on this path that you should check out.

Wildlife

The wildlife in Chichijima is very diverse, there are many plants and fauna endemic to the island. If you walk around the island you'll likely encounter some wild goats, petrels, woodpigeons, fruit bats (rare) and many geckos and lizards.

Native products

Some stores sometimes sell Ogasawara bananas and papayas (although they're very expensive). You can also find many derived products at the souvenir stores like Ogasawara salt, passion fruit jams and cookies as well as lime jams and juices.

Restaurants

There are many restaurants on the island, most of them are in Omura. Some are on the main street, and a few are on the street parallel to it. Many restaurants, like izakayas (japanese pub with light fare), open after 17h30. Izakayas serve drinks, and have extensive food menus made up of dishes to share. Some will have english menus, but not all. Sometimes there is a button on the table that you can use to call a server to take your order.

If you want to ask for the bill, a good way to ask is to make eye contact with a waiter, and to cross your fingers (from different hands) together to form an X. This means, "I am ready to pay", with this gesture, if the waiter is within ear range you can say

Okaikei onegaishimasu!

The bill please!

("O kaikei" means bill.)